

12.18.2007 - House Passes 2008 Omnibus Appropriations Bill - Beckley and Bluefield

The U.S. House of Representatives late Monday approved the comprehensive 2008 Omnibus Appropriations bill, which includes funding requested by Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) for projects in southern West Virginia, including Route 10, Greenbrier River Basin flood control, the Southern West Virginia Environmental Infrastructure project, Community Connections Teen Centers, and the Connected Technologies Corridor (CTC) Program.

At Rahall's request, the Omnibus bill includes \$980,000 specifically for widening and safety improvements along Route 10, between US-119 and I-64 in Lincoln, Logan, and Wyoming Counties, continuing Rahall's long-running efforts to improve what is widely recognized as one of the nation's most dangerous roads.

"For too long, we have traveled on the dangerous, deteriorating Route 10," said Rahall. "This funding will help to bring an added measure of safety to the many West Virginians who use the road each day."

The bill also included \$468,384 sought by Rahall for the Southern West Virginia Environmental Infrastructure Project to continue implementation of environmental infrastructure projects under the pilot program and \$1,476,000 to continue work on the Marlinton portion of the Greenbrier River flood protection plan. This funding brings the total amount in federal funding that Rep. Rahall has won for this effort in recent years to \$7.5 million.

"Our nation's water infrastructure is often overlooked, but in southern West Virginia we do not have that luxury," Rahall said. "I will continue to do all I can to secure the needed investments so that our water is safe and clean, and our communities are protected from flooding."

The bill also included \$39,480 requested by Rahall for Community Connections Teen Centers in Mercer and Wayne Counties that will allow Community Connections to make facility improvements and expand after-school and weekend programming. The Community Connections facilities offer homework-based tutoring, computer labs, recreational activities, alcohol, tobacco, and drug abuse prevention programs, parental training programs, and town hall meetings.

Congressman Rahall also secured \$150,000 for the Connected Technologies Corridor (CTC) Program, a regional, economic development entity that aims to improve the technology infrastructure and entrepreneurial development in southern West Virginia. The CTC program encompasses projects for which Rahall has helped steer \$9 million in federal dollars in the past, including the Interstate 64 Technology Corridor, the Interstate 77 Technology Corridor, and technology centers and business parks in Lewisburg, Hinton, Montgomery, Huntington and Beckley, as well as at Concord University.

"This funding is essential to the development of a program that will help to bring the latest technological opportunities to businesses in our area and will help keep all of southern West Virginia on a level playing field in a sector that is becoming increasingly more competitive and constantly changing," Rahall said.

The bill also includes \$49,200 for the Cherry River Basin.

"True credit belongs to Senator Byrd," said Rahall. "Without his strong and vigorous leadership at the helm of the Senate Appropriations Committee, we would simply not have been able to achieve these levels of funding for our domestic needs. I salute his commitment to bringing valuable federal investments to West Virginia, and will continue to enjoy working with him to address the issues important to our communities."

The bill combines the 11 remaining Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriations bills into one omnibus bill. The legislation will provide appropriations for projects across the country and fund all federal government agencies. The Fiscal Year 2008 Defense Appropriations Bill was passed earlier this year.